

Read "THE BANK DRAFT RAISER," in No. 86 Nick Carter Library.

NICK CARTER



NICK CARTER IN VARIOUS DISGUISES

LIBRARY



The Best 5 Cent Library of Detective Stories.

Entered According to Act of Congress, in the Year 1892, by Street & Smith, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, April 1, 1893. Issued Weekly. Subscription Price, \$2.50 per Year. April 1, 1893.

No. 87.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

NEW YORK.

31 Rose St., N. Y. P. O. Box 2734.

5 Cents.

THE WATCHMAKER'S HAMMER; Or, Nick Carter's Quick Decision.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER."



NICK'S PRISONER TRIED TO ESCAPE, BUT THE GREAT DETECTIVE QUICKLY OVERPOWERED HIM.

The Watchmaker's Hammer;

OR,

NICK CARTER'S QUICK DECISION.

By the author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

FOUND DEAD.

"Help! Help!"

The cry was repeated several times by the haggard old gentleman standing at the window of a handsome Dearborn avenue residence, in the city of Chicago, before he succeeded in attracting attention.

Then a man, driving slowly along in a cutter, stopped and looked up to the second-story window where the old gentleman stood.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Come closer," said the man at the window, in a husky tone.

The man saw that the old gentleman's efforts had left him weak and faint, and stepped into the yard and stopped directly under the window.

"Now tell me," he said.

"I am alone on this floor," was the reply, "and I can't make my servants hear. There is something wrong in the house."

"Throw me a key, and I'll go in and investigate."

"I have no key. I've not been on the first floor for months. Break down the door."

The stranger hesitated.

For all he knew, he might be talking with a madman.

"Wait," he said, in a moment, "and I'll call an officer."

Dearborn avenue runs from the Chicago river north to Lincoln park, lying just east of North Clark street.

The stranger drove around to the latter street and summoned an officer.

When they reached the window where the old gentleman had been standing he was not there, but the sash was still up, and moans of pain came from the inside.

The policeman tried all his keys, but none of them would fit the lock on the front door.

"Break it down," said the faint voice at the window.

The policeman procured an ax and chopped his way into the hall.

By this time a little crowd had collected on the sidewalk.

The officer called to the stranger to follow him, and stepped into the house.

In a moment he started back with a look of terror on his face.

"Look there!" he shouted.

The body of a dead woman lay close to the door opening into the vestibule.

"There has been murder here," said the officer. "Some one go to the nearest telephone and call the wagon."

One of the men in the crowd outside darted away.

The stranger stooped down to lift the body from the floor.

"Don't touch it," said the officer, "until the coroner comes."

The officer started up stairs to the assistance of the old gentleman who had given the alarm.

"He may have been wounded," he said.

Half-way through the hall he stopped.

"Come here," he shouted back to the stranger. "There is another body here."

It was too true!

A gray-haired woman lay dead on the floor at the foot of the main staircase!

"This is horrible," gasped the stranger.

"The thugs who are making Chicago notorious the world over have been at work here," said the officer.

The two men hastened up stairs.

The old gentleman lay on the floor by the open window, too exhausted to move away from the place where he had fallen.

"I thought you would never come," he said, fretfully.

"What is going on down stairs?"

The stranger was about to speak, but the officer checked him.

"What noises have you heard?" he asked.

"None," was the reply.

"Who has been here this afternoon?"

"No one but my nephew. Why don't you tell me what has happened?"

"Murder has happened. There are two dead women lying on the floor down stairs."

"Two?"

"Yes. Who are they?"

"I don't know. Help me down there."

The old gentleman was carried to the lower floor.

"This one," he said, bending over the body of the woman in the front end of the hall, "is Bettie, my housekeeper."

"And the other?"

"Mrs. Morse, a widow, who frequently visited her."

"And you heard no sounds indicating a struggle?"

"None."

"Chicago's carnival of crime is on again," said the officer.

The police wagon now drove up to the door.

Among those to get out was a plainly dressed gentleman, who seemed to be a retired merchant or banker. He was treated with great respect by all the officers of the party.

One of the officers stepped forward and whispered a few words to the man who had broken into the house.

"And he has full charge of the case?" asked the latter.

"Certainly."

"I'm glad of it."

He hesitated a moment, and then asked:

"How did Nick Carter get here so soon?"

"He has been here winding up the affairs of the Crescent Brotherhood, and was just going to the train when the report of this murder was sent in."

"Well, he's got another job now. If this is not the Crescent Brotherhood in a new form, and under new leaders, I am much mistaken."

"You may be right."

The old gentleman was assisted to his room on the second floor, and the detective proceeded to make a rigid examination of the premises.

It was indeed a strange case—one of the strangest Nick Carter had ever undertaken.

Nothing about the place had been disturbed.

There was a large sum of money in the old gentleman's room, but it had not been touched.

This seemed to be the strangest part of the affair.

The old gentleman was so feeble that he could have offered no resistance, and all his portable effects would therefore have been at the mercy of the murderers.

There were no indications that the men who had committed the two murders had even left the lower floor.

What, then, was the motive for the crime?

Its two victims were respectable old women, little likely to provoke enmity of the violent kind.

The great detective was, for almost the first time in his life, absolutely without a clue to start in on.

"Why didn't they murder the old man and get the money?" asked one of the officers.

Nick hastened up stairs and sat down by the old gentleman.

"Where have you been sitting all day?" he asked.

"Here, by the window."

"Do you always sit by the window?"

"Yes—always."

Nick looked out upon the street.

"And there are always people passing?" he asked.

"Yes."

Nick went back down stairs.

"The man owes his life to the fact that he sat by the window to-day," he thought.

Then the detective made a close examination of the bodies, and the wounds which had caused death.

In each case the fatal wound had been a blow on the skull.

The blow had been so direct, so well aimed, and so incisive, that it needed no repetition.

The officers disagreed as to the kind of weapon that had been used.

It seemed that no clue to the identity of the criminal was likely to come from this direction.

"Now," said Nick, "is there any one who can tell me anything about the family affairs of the old gentleman?"

One of the neighbors replied that the old gentleman had but one relative in the city—a nephew.

"And the dead women?"

Nothing was known of them.

"Wait," said the neighbor. "Here comes the nephew, now."

CHAPTER II.

"WHO RANG THE BELL."

The nephew was a very pleasant appearing gentleman—young, good looking, and well dressed.

He glanced hastily at the two dead bodies in the hall, and went on up stairs.

A moment later, Nick found him seated by his uncle's side.

His face was very pale.

"And to think," he said, turning to the detective, "that I must have been in the house at the very instant the murders were committed."

To say that Nick was surprised, but feebly expressed it.

"Tell me about it," he said, briefly.

"I came here to see my uncle at one o'clock," began the young man.

"Why are you so positive about the time?"

"I heard the hour strike as I entered the house."

"Well?"

"I came right up stairs, and sat here for an hour."

"Where was your uncle sitting?"

"Where he sits now—by the window."

"Go on."

"While we sat here talking, I heard the bell ring."

"Was that unusual?"

"Yes, for uncle rarely receives company."

"Proceed."

"I waited some time for the housekeeper to answer the ring, but did not hear the door open and close."

"You could have heard it from here?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"And then I went down stairs and opened the door myself."

"Did you see anything of the housekeeper on the way down?"

"I did not."

"You saw where the body lay when you came in?"

"Yes."

"If it had been there when you opened the door would you have seen it?"

"I am not sure of that. You know the hall is quite dark."

"Then you admitted the visitor?"

"There was no one at the door."

This was becoming decidedly interesting.

The detective arose to his feet and walked up and down the room for a moment without speaking. Then he turned to the young man.

"Who rang the bell?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Was there no one in sight?"

"No one who could have been at the door and turned away."

"Did you step out and look about?"

"Yes, and that is the way I got locked out."

"Oh, you got locked out, did you? Tell me about it."

"As I stepped outside, a gust of wind came down the hall and banged the door shut."

"And you had no key?"

"Exactly."

"And then?"

"No one answered my ring, and I went to my room, only a few blocks away."

"Without your hat and overcoat?"

"Yes. My hat and overcoat are on the chair there now."

Nick glanced inquiringly at the old gentleman.

"He has told everything just as it occurred," said the latter.

"It is a very strange case," said the detective.

"But not too complicated for Nick Carter to unravel."

Nick turned angrily toward the door.

The lieutenant of police, who had arrived in the wagon, stood there with a smile on his face.

A pleased smile crept over the old man's face, and the young man turned away to conceal a pale and agitated countenance.

"You are imprudent," said Nick, addressing the officer.

"There surely can be no harm—"

"There is always harm in talking," said the detective.

Nick went back to the hall and looked at the wounds on the dead bodies again.

They were perfectly round, and were very deep in the skull.

The instrument with which they had been inflicted was, perhaps, five-eighths of an inch in diameter and perfectly smooth.

Then the detective measured the distance from the body of the old housekeeper to the place a person would naturally walk over in passing from the foot of the staircase to the front door.

They were not a foot apart.

"Still," he muttered, "a person might walk along there and not touch the body. But without seeing it—well, that is a different matter. The young man may be telling the truth, however."

Nick beckoned to the man who had announced himself as a neighbor of the old man, and the two walked away together.

"Tell me about this nephew," said the detective.

"So far as I know, there is nothing to tell about him."

"His habits, for instance?"

"All correct, I think."

"His expectations?"

"He will inherit all his uncle's property."

"And that is——"

"A very large sum. The old gentleman is a millionaire."

"Where does he live?"

"At a very respectable private hotel, on North Clark street."

"Can you give me the number?"

The neighbor did so, and Nick thanked him and walked away.

"The place will bear watching," he thought.

He rented a furnished room in a house on North Clark street, and took possession at once.

The windows of his room opened out on the alley in the rear of the house on Dearborn avenue.

The front of the house in which his room was situated was almost directly opposite the private hotel where Charles Mildon, the nephew of the old man, boarded.

Nick's first work was to change his personal appearance.

"If that fool of an officer had kept his mouth shut," he thought, "this would not have been necessary at present. As it is, too many know that Nick Carter is at work on the case."

When Nick stepped out of the room again he appeared to be about seventeen years old. He was dressed in a shabby suit, and hung around the street like a boy looking for a job.

About dusk Charles Mildon passed leisurely down the street.

He wore a rough overcoat and a soft felt hat, which was pulled well down over his eyes.

Nick followed him and saw that he met a woman at the next corner.

The woman was richly dressed, and wore a very thin veil over a rather handsome face.

Instead of passing on down the street in the direction in which Charley had been going, they turned north and walked toward Division street.

Nick stepped into a stair-way and watched them.

The light of a street lamp shone strongly upon the woman's face as she passed the place where the detective stood, and Nick recognized her as one of the most daring shop-lifters and confidence operators in the country.

For an instant Nick did not know what course to pursue.

He had a desperate case on hand.

The Crescent Brotherhood, or some equally powerful organization, was still at work.

Notwithstanding his acquaintance with the woman, known as Madge Bell, the young man might be innocent of all knowledge of the murder of his uncle's housekeeper and her friend.

They might have been murdered by the gang. Madge Bell might be the next housekeeper.

The nephew as well as the uncle might be marked for destruction.

"The case is a very pretty one to handle," thought Nick.

Nick followed the couple up the street until they came

to the Windsor Theater. There they stopped and stood for some moments on the walk. The detective crept nearer, in order to hear what was being said.

He heard his own name mentioned.

Then the woman turned about and regarded the seeming boy intently.

In a moment she raised her hand to her face, and then Nick received a violent push from behind which landed him on the walk.

"What are you doin' here?" demanded a gruff voice.

Young Mildon and the woman stood looking on with evident interest.

Nick sprang to his feet and backed away.

He knew well enough what the woman was thinking.

She thought that the boy might be Nick Carter in disguise. In that case he would make a fight.

To strike him would be a sure test, as she thought.

So Nick blubbered as he backed away.

"I wasn't doin' anything," he said. "I want a job."

Charley and Madge turned and walked away.

"It wasn't him, after all," Nick heard the woman say.

In a moment the fellow who had struck the detective joined the man and woman, and all passed into a beer garden. When Nick entered the place a moment later they were nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER III.

DESPERATE WORK.

"I am glad you are still in the city, Mr. Carter."

The chief of the Chicago police force and Nick Carter were in the former's private office, talking over the murders on Dearborn avenue.

The time was the morning following the discovery of the crime.

"I am afraid," was the reply, "that we have another well organized gang of criminals to deal with."

"After all that crowd we took in the day before yesterday?"

"Yes. You see all the crooks in the world are steering for Chicago. They expect a rich harvest here during the fair."

"Something must be done to check them. They will ruin the city."

"Yes; something must be done."

Before the chief could reply, the door opened and an officer stood waiting for permission to speak.

The chief motioned him to proceed.

"There has been another murder on Prairie avenue," said the officer.

Nick sprang to his feet.

"Unless I leave town at once," he said, "I shall have to stay here until the close of the fair."

"What is it?" asked the chief, turning to the policeman.

"Mr. Austin was shot down at his own door at daylight this morning by two burglars."

"Ah, that accounts for the affair not being in the morning papers. It took place after they went to press."

The policeman seemed to know very little about the affair, and so Nick ordered a hack and proceeded to the spot.

He found Mr. Austin lying mortally wounded in his own sitting-room.

He had received a bullet wound in the stomach and another wound on the head.

The detective could scarcely conceal his excitement as he made an examination of the latter wound.

It was an exact counterpart of the wounds on the dead woman on the North Side.

The circular mark, however, was not quite so deep as those in the other case.

This accounted for the man not dying instantly, for the blow had been struck in the same place.

Mrs. Austin stood weeping by the side of her dying husband.

"He was returning home at daylight," she said, "and

saw two men trying to effect an entrance to the house by means of a side window."

"Did he give the alarm?"

"No; he thought that a word would frighten them away."

"I see."

"He drew his revolver, and asked them what they wanted."

"Did they make reply?"

"No; they fired at him instantly. I heard the shot from my room."

"And then they went away?"

Nick wanted the woman to tell about the other wound without his asking about it.

"No; the first shot did not take effect. They fired again and again, and Mr. Austin answered every shot with one from his own weapon. At last he fell to the walk, wounded as you see."

"And the men ran away?"

"No; as Mr. Austin lay on the walk he fired and hit one of the burglars. There was a trail of blood on the walk when I went out."

"And that was all?"

"Then the man who was not wounded sprang forward with an oath and struck Mr. Austin with some small instrument which glistened in the light of the street lamp."

"What did it look like?"

"I could only see the flash."

"Did the object glisten clear down to the hand that held it?"

"There seemed to be a handle to the instrument. The flash was long up and down, and not from the hand out."

"You would have made a good detective," thought Nick, as he turned away.

A dozen officers were in the district, but no discoveries had been made.

The trail of blood ended a few feet from the house, and no wounded man had applied for treatment to any druggist or doctor in the vicinity of the house.

The trail seemed to be lost.

Nick was certain of one thing, however.

A weapon similar to the one which had killed the two women on Dearborn avenue had wounded Mr. Austin. It might even be the same one.

Nick went north on Cottage Grove avenue and stopped at the first saloon, after passing Thirty-Ninth street. Mr. Austin's residence, being in the Hyde Park district, was some distance from any saloon.

Nick seated himself at a table and waited.

Two men, seemingly asleep, sat at the next table.

One of them was the man who had struck him on North Clark street the day before.

Nick was now dressed as a workingman, and he thought it would be a good time to play even with the fellow.

He walked over to where he sat, with his head on the table, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Wake up an' have a drink," he said. "This ain't no lodgin'-house."

The fellow raised his head and struck a vicious blow at Nick's stomach.

"You'll git a swipe in the jaw if you don't keep away from me," he said.

"No offense," said Nick. "I just wanted you to take a drink."

"Get out."

The fellow placed his head on the table again, and Nick carelessly spilled some beer down the back of his neck.

The bum sprang up and advanced upon the detective.

The saloon keeper rushed out from behind the bar with a club in his hand.

"Let him alone," thundered the latter. "I'll take care of the fresh mark."

Nick had secured the information he was after.

The saloon was one of the meeting places of the new gang.

The proprietor would never have taken up the fight of a man who was only a casual customer.

The next thing was to see the face of the other man.

The seeming bum fell back as the proprietor advanced upon Nick with his club raised.

Nick dodged the blow and gave the mixer of drinks a crack that curled him up against the bar.

The tough then bounded forward.

Nick saw that he held a knife in his hand.

He did not know how to use the weapon, however, and soon left an opening for the detective's muscular right.

The tough went down on top of the saloon keeper.

They did not act like men who wanted to renew the fight.

The fellow at the table raised his head and looked about.

Nick gave a start of surprise.

It was Charley Mildon.

"The whole thing is easy now," thought the detective. "I've only got to get my proof and run these chaps in. I'll be on my way to New York in twenty-four hours."

But the detective had a tougher job on hand than he counted on.

As the men arose to their feet the door opened and Madge Bell entered the saloon.

She stepped up to young Mildon and laid her hand on his head.

"If your drunk has lasted long enough," she said, "perhaps you had better come home."

Then she saw that something was wrong in the saloon, and turned toward the place where Nick stood.

Her handsome face grew pale in an instant.

Nick saw that he had been recognized.

He touched his cigar to the lighter and walked away.

"You will all be in jail in a week," whispered the woman, "if you don't keep your eyes open. Do you know who that was?"

"Some prize-fighter," said the saloon keeper.

"It was Nick Carter."

"You're crazy on the subject of Nick Carter," said the tough.

At that moment a tall, slim fellow, with a villainous face, entered the saloon.

Taking a pint whisky bottle from his pocket, he placed it very gently on the bar.

"Here it is," he said.

"What is it?"

"Nitro-glycerine."

"Take it away! You will blow up the place," shouted the proprietor of the saloon.

"I was ordered to bring it here."

"By whom?"

"The General."

"What for?"

"For use."

"Who is to use it?"

"Brocky."

The tough turned pale.

"How am I to use it?" he demanded.

"Feed it to Nick Carter," replied the other, with a grin.

"Follow him," cried the woman, "he has just left the place."

Brocky took the bottle in one trembling hand and stood waiting for more definite instructions.

"Follow him," cried the woman again.

"And when I overtake him, then what?"

"Throw the bottle at his feet and run."

"It may destroy a building and kill a hundred men."

"Wait until you come to a vacant place, then."

"Go," said the man who had brought the bottle. "It is death to disobey."

Brocky placed the bottle carefully in his pocket, and started out.

"Now," said Madge, "when we hear an explosion we shall know that Nick Carter is forever out of our way."

"We may not be able to hear it from this place."

"Yes we shall. Nick Carter will not go far away. He is watching me too closely for that."

"And Charley," added the saloon keeper

"Charley? Did he recognize him here?"

"You would have thought so if you had seen the look he gave him just before you came in."

"Then Charley is the one he is after, and it is not for the burglary down here, either."

"I suppose not."

"And if this explosion scheme don't work, we must do something more desperate still."

"In the line of killing him?"
 "No; in the line of deceiving him."
 The three crooks whispered together for some moments. Then they all sprang to their feet, half stunned by a deafening explosion.
 A moment later Brocky dashed into the place. He was pale and trembling.
 Without saying a word he rushed behind the bar and drank copiously from a bottle of whisky.
 "Well?" said the woman.
 "I did it."
 "Yes."
 "And Nick Carter was sent more than a hundred feet in the air."
 "Then he is dead?"
 "Yes, and the officers are after me."
 "Did they see you throw it?"
 "Yes."
 "Then you must not stay here."
 The saloon keeper opened a back door and Brocky disappeared.
 Then half a dozen officers swept into the saloon.
 "Where is he?" they demanded.
 "Who?"
 "You know who very well," said the man in charge of the squad. "Get a move on and bring him out."
 One of the officers dashed into the back room, and in a moment the sounds of blows and pistol-shots were heard.
 The officers sprang to the assistance of their comrade. Charley and Madge crept out unnoticed.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE SACKS CONTAINED.

When the explosion designed to kill Nick Carter took place, all that part of the city of Chicago was thrown into a tumult of excitement.

It was reported that the anarchists had arisen, and were about to destroy the city.

Every man who owned a building near the scene of the explosion declared that the purpose of the bomb-throwing—for as such the affair was at first regarded—was to destroy his property.

Police wagons rattled recklessly about the city, and squads of uniformed officers were on every corner.

But the man most interested in the explosion went his way, paying very little attention to the excitement about him.

Brocky had not thrown the explosive within a dozen rods of the spot where the detective stood.

The report he made to the people in the saloon upon his return was entirely imaginary.

The only truth he told in connection with the affair was that the officers had seen him throw the bottle, and were after him.

Nick was a trifle disgusted at the turn affairs had taken, and at once hastened to his room, where he had notified Chick, one of his assistants, to report.

But Chick was not there.

The detective knew that all his future movements would be closely watched by the members of the gang.

"I guess I am losing my cunning in the matter of disguises," he thought, sitting down by the window with a cigar in his mouth. "I have been recognized in every one I have worn in Chicago."

Then he thought of the boy disguise, and went and put it on.

It grew dark while he sat at the window.

The lights in the places of business below shone out on the alley between North Clark street and Dearborn avenue, making it almost as light as day.

Nick noticed that a large number of teams were passing through the alley, many of them stopping almost under his windows.

Such as stopped there were hastily loaded with heavy sacks.

The work seemed to be done with as little noise as possible.

The detective could not see for some time where the sacks came from, but at last he saw that they were being carried from the basement of the building in which his room was situated.

He puzzled over the matter for some time, and then went down to the street.

The ground floor of the building was occupied as a saloon, and the basement seemed to be used as a cobbler's shop.

Nick found a place in one shoe which needed fixing, and went down into the shop.

There was only one shoe-bench in sight, and the man who occupied it sat there reading a paper.

"I have a hole in my shoe," Nick said, bashfully. "Can I get it fixed here?"

"The cobbler is not in."

The detective sat down to wait.

In the silence that followed he could hear men talking in the back basement.

Presently he heard the thud of picks and the scraping of shovels.

Then he knew what the sacks contained.

The men were removing earth from the basement.

The man on the shoe-bench heard the sounds, too, and glanced up from his paper.

"You needn't wait," he said, "the cobbler will not be back to-night."

"May I take a waxed thread and fix it myself?"

Nick was determined to stay in the basement as long as possible.

"The shop is not mine," said the man, "and the owner don't want people fooling around in his absence. Get your shoe fixed at some other shop."

Nick started away.

As he reached the door some one stepped into the shop from the rear.

During the minute that the rear door was open, Nick heard a voice from the place where the shoveling was going on.

"It looks like a man's leg," the voice said.

"It is a man's leg," said another voice.

The noise of the picks and shovels stopped for an instant.

"Keep your finds to yourselves," said a third voice, in a moment. "You are not here to talk."

Then the rear door closed, and Nick could hear no more.

The man who had entered called the detective back.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I came down to get my shoe fixed."

"Let me see it."

Nick held up his broken shoe.

The man looked at it a moment, and then his eyes traveled back to the detective's face.

Nick knew that he had been called back in order that he might be inspected, and put on his most boyish look.

The men had heard the words from the rear plainly, and they knew that the customer must have heard them.

"You can get it fixed on the way home," said the man. "Where do you live?"

"Right in this building."

"Then come in the morning. We are fixing the basement to-night, and no more work can be done."

Then the two men began talking in Italian, a language with which the detective was thoroughly familiar.

"He may be a spy," one of them said. "If so he has heard too much."

"No," was the reply. "He's some gawk from the shops over on the river. Let him go."

Nick stood looking at the two men stupidly for a moment.

"My father used to talk German," he said.

The men laughed, and Nick closed the door.

"The chances are," he thought, as he passed up to his room again, "that those men are digging a tunnel. I wonder if thieves and murderers will ever get tired of burrowing in the earth?"

Chick was in the little back room when Nick got there.

He smiled as Nick entered and stood leaning against the door.

"Well, young fellow," he said, "why don't you come in and sit down like a white man?"

Nick pointed to the windows facing the alley.

"Make a show of undressing," he said, "and then open the inside blinds and turn out the gas."

Nick remained by the door while his orders were being carried out.

"Now, then," said Chick, when the two men were in the dark, "what sort of a deal do you call this?"

"We're in for a fight with another gang," said Nick.

"We are now right over their meeting place, and they are digging a tunnel to some other point."

In a short time Chick was fully posted as to the happenings of the day, and then Nick began to put on what he called his "rowdy suit."

When fully attired in it, he looked like the popular pictures of Bill Sykes, in "Oliver Twist."

In the meantime Chick had been watching from the window.

"There's something more than tunneling going on down there," he remarked, turning to Nick. "There's something in those bags besides the earth they are digging out."

"What does it look like?"

"A sack they just put on the wagon has the shape of a human body."

"That is to be expected," was the reply, "for we know them to be murderers as well as burglars and thieves. Get on some tough rig, and we'll find out where those wagons go."

The detectives were soon in the street, following one of the wagons—the one carrying the suspicious-looking sack.

It went north to Webster avenue and then turned west.

Just west of the bridge crossing the river on this street there is an old brick-yard, now used as a dumping place for such material as the crooks were disposing of.

The place is a desolate one, with the river on two sides, for there is a bend on the north, and the railway track on the west.

Nick and Chick crept behind one of the old shanties and watched the workmen unload the wagon.

The sack that looked as if it contained a body was taken off first and placed in a deep pit without being emptied. Then the earth from the other sacks was dumped on top of it.

When the wagons went away the two detectives crept forward and began to dig.

"This find will account for some mysterious disappearance," said Chick, as they came to the sack.

"It will do more than that—it will account for two disappearances."

The voice from out the darkness seemed to be within a foot of their ears, and the two detectives drew their guns.

They were too late. They were thrown from their feet by a perfect shower of earth-filled sacks, and in a moment more were buried deep beneath a suffocating load. They had not even time to give the alarm by firing their weapons.

"When you get out, Nick Carter," whispered a voice, "just call at the old place."

Then, smothered and crushed by the heavy weight upon him, the detectives heard no more.

CHAPTER V.

THE LADY HUSTLERS.

"Well, girls, I reckon we done 'em."

"Bet yer life."

"They wasn't in it at any stage of the game."

"We'll have de Auditorium next year."

The cigarette girls and the paper box girls were having a high old time at a mask-ball on South Clark street.

They had "laid themselves out" to do the tobacco strippers, and they considered that they had done so.

Many of the strippers were present.

"Wese took in enough cold, hard plunks at our blow-out t' buy up this show," said one of them, disdainfully, "so we thought we'd blow in a little to help youse people out."

"Well, youse don't need to help us people out," said a cigarette girl, "look there."

The floor was crowded with dancers. Few of the men were in fancy dress, but the girls had exhausted every resource of color and cut.

Drinks of all kinds were circulating freely.

The boxes were full of weary dancers.

"More fizz wiz, Cholly."

"Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve beers here, Frenchy."

"Whishey an' sh'gars mixed fer four jags here."

And so the orders poured in.

A big, burly young fellow who had come in as a free lance, and was in for a good time, with or without a fight, the former preferred, had been making himself obnoxious all the evening.

Finally he walked up to a quiet young fellow who was talking with a pretty girl near the stage.

"Say, young feller, wot's yer ladyfren's name?" he demanded.

There was no answer, and the tough turned to the girl.

"Pretty, give us a smack," he said.

The girl boxed his ears sharply, and as he continued in his efforts to kiss her, her escort quietly stuck his fist under his jaw and landed him flat on the floor.

"Kick him in de gob," yelled a dozen voices.

"Ar, let de fresh mug go," said the young fellow.

Then he turned to the tough.

"Youse git out o' here," he said, "or I'll punch yer face back inter shape again."

The "mug" got up and made his way out.

Then the quiet young fellow and his companion left the hall and walked up and down the long corridor.

"They're keeping out of sight," said the former, after some time.

"But they were here a short time ago," said the seeming girl.

There they are now. They have changed their costumes again."

No one but a keen-eyed detective like Nick Carter would have recognized Charley Mildon and Madge Bell in the two comically masked and hooded figures before them.

As they stepped into the hall the dancers were forming for a quadrille. Nick and Chick, the latter in his female costume, watched them a few moments and then passed around to where the two maskers they were following were dancing.

"There," said Nick, in a whisper, "there are eight of the greatest crooks on the continent dancing in that one set."

"That's all right," said Chick, "but we are making no progress. We haven't caught onto a single point yet."

"Those costumes ought to be here by this time," said Nick.

Then the two detectives were called into one of the dressing-rooms.

A boy from a costumer was awaiting them there with a huge bundle.

Nick locked the door of the room, and in a few moments he stood before his assistant a perfect image of the millionaire's nephew.

"Now you make a mash on Charley Mildon," he said, "and I'll see what I can learn from Madge Bell."

In ten minutes the famous confidence woman and the equally famous detective were dancing and chatting together, while Chick and Charley Mildon were flirting in a dusky corner.

"Most of the boys are here to-night," said Madge. "I saw Number Thirty-four, and he said that every number below him was here."

"Yes, they are doing well."

"We shall never do well until we get rid of those two New York detectives," was the fretful reply.

"It beats the devil about that affair last night."

"Yes. Who would have supposed they would find their

way out of a hole like that, with a ton of earth on top of them?"

"Well, they did."

"They have more luck than a nigger at a lottery drawing, anyway," said the woman. "The tramps who went to the dump pit to look for plunder and uncovered them ought to be burned alive."

Nick did not think so. He shuddered when he thought of the awful peril they had been in, and felt that the hundred dollars he had given the tramps had not been half enough.

"You are the one they seem to be after," said the woman, after a pause.

"Yes."

"We shall have to work the scheme I proposed at the saloon on the South Side."

Nick, of course, had no idea what the scheme alluded to was, but he answered at random:

"It is risky."

"And therefore safe."

The music ceased for an instant, and Nick saw Chick and Charley Mildon approaching them, Chick all the time trying to direct the young man's attention to another part of the hall.

But it was too late. He had already caught sight of his counterpart talking with Madge.

Then Nick tried to get Madge away, but she had seen Charley approaching and refused to move.

She turned to Nick with rage fairly blazing from her eyes.

"You are an impostor," she almost shouted, catching him by the arm. "Tell me who you are."

Nick jerked away, but Charley bounded forward and stood before him.

"What have you been saying to this man?" he demanded, facing the woman, who stood trembling between the two men.

Nick raised his hand significantly, and Chick darted away.

"I know who you are," said the woman, at length, in a hoarse whisper, "you are Nick Carter. You have come here to spy upon us. If you so much as move a finger I will kill you where you stand. I have my revolver under my dress."

The dancers saw that something unusual was going on, and began to gather about the little group.

Then the detective heard a sharp whistle, three times repeated, and a score of masked men gathered around him.

A dozen revolvers and as many knives were in sight.

"A spy."

"A traitor."

"Down with him."

Nick knew that he was in close quarters.

He worked his way backward until he stood against the wall.

Then he saw that the men were preparing for a rush.

The detective turned his face toward the door, as if expecting help from that quarter.

As the gang started forward the lights went out, and the room was in total darkness.

Then Nick, striking out with both muscular hands, sprang toward the line of toughs.

"No lead."

"No steel."

"Seize him."

"Don't cut your friends."

These were the cries that rang through the hall.

They were undoubtedly the means of saving the life of the daring detective. He forced his way through the line, knocking right and left, and made his way to the door.

Half-way down the corridor, he heard a scuffle in a closet under the stairs leading to the next floor. He knew what it meant. When Chick, in carrying out a previously arranged plan, had turned out the lights at the main meter, he had been observed by some member of the gang and followed into the closet.

Nick sprang inside, and found his assistant lying on the floor, with a stalwart tough bending over him.

"How went down at the first blow, but he had

already turned on the gas. The next instant the dance hall and corridor were blazing with light.

Nick drew the fellow inside the closet and closed the door.

There was no use in trying to escape now. He must take his chances there, and make a fight if they discovered his hiding-place.

In a moment he heard Madge's voice in the corridor.

"They never went down stairs," she said. "I have a man watching there. Search every part of the hall."

The dancers who were not members of the gang began to look ugly.

"Wot youse fellers breakin' up our party fer?" demanded a muscular young tough, striking out at one of the most prominent members of the gang, who seemed to be leading in the search.

In a moment all was confusion. Shots were fired, and then the heavy tread of a squad of police was heard on the stairs.

The detective shook Chick heavily by the shoulder.

"Come," he said. "Now is our time to escape."

The young man did not move.

Nick touched the still face and drew his hand back covered with blood. Chick had been seriously hurt.

Nick tore off his last disguise and crept out.

He whispered a moment to an officer in the corridor and passed out of the building, close behind Charley and Madge.

As he did so three officers left the dance hall and approached the closet where the two men lay.

CHAPTER VI.

CRAPE ON THE DOOR.

Millionaire Mildon sat alone in his room in the mansion on Dearborn avenue. He was very pale, and his face showed mental as well as physical suffering.

At every sound from the room below he bent his head forward and listened intently. The time was the afternoon following the mask-ball on South Clark street.

At last the old gentleman heard footsteps on the stairs outside of his door, and then a woman stepped into the room.

She was a handsome and well-built woman, and appeared to think herself fascinating, for her bold eyes carried a look of mingled scorn and assurance.

Nick Carter would have recognized her as Madge Bell, but the old man simply knew her as his new housekeeper.

Mr. Mildon looked up inquiringly as she entered.

The woman cast her eyes downward and covered her face with her handkerchief.

"He is worse, then?"

The old man's voice trembled as he asked the question.

"He is dead."

The millionaire gave a cry of agony and fell to the floor.

When the woman reached his side he was unconscious.

"He takes the death of his dear nephew rather hard," said the woman, with a strange smile on her face.

She summoned the servants to attend to the stricken man and went down stairs.

Charley Mildon, cold and still, lay on a bed in the sleeping room off the back parlor. Madge bent over and touched his face. It was as cold as ice.

The family physician advanced from the front parlor and stood by the bed.

"It is the strangest case I ever heard of," he said. "The young man was strong and well yesterday. But then many people are dying from disease of the heart."

"You are certain that heart trouble caused his death, doctor?"

The woman almost smiled as she asked the question.

"There is no doubt of it," was the reply.

Madge followed the doctor to the door.

"File your certificate of death," she said, "and we will attend to the rest. The dead man had a friend in the undertaking business, and he expressed a wish to have him called."

The doctor went away, and then the undertaker came. He seemed to know very little about the business, and to do very little, but no one complained.

Then friends dropped in, and the next day very quiet services were held in the parlors.

Among those who asked the privilege of viewing the remains was a middle-aged gentleman whom no one knew.

As he passed out he glanced keenly at the faces about him, and when he reached North-Clark street he turned into the rooms occupied by Nick Carter and Chick.

There he threw off his disguise and became Nick Carter himself.

Chick lay on the bed with a bad wound on his head.

He had received a cut while fighting in the closet the night before, and had been taken home by the officers. Nick had notified when he went away in pursuit of Madge and her companion.

"It is a strange thing," said Nick, throwing himself into a chair. "I don't understand it at all."

"Don't understand what?"

"The death of Charley Mildon"

"He is dead, then?"

"Yes."

"Would it be for the interest of the gang to put him out of the way?"

"I don't see how."

"You know that Madge told you last night that they had a scheme in reserve. This may be it."

"But she supposed herself to be talking to Charley. She wouldn't talk to him about it if it was likely to end in his murder, would she?"

"Hardly."

"That's what I can't understand."

"Any more trouble about the city?"

"Yes. Murders and robberies every day, and we are no nearer the head of the gang than we were when we started in."

"Well," was the reply, "we've got the gang located. The other is only a question of time."

"I'm going to that funeral," said Nick, in a moment.

"Where is the interment to take place?"

"At Graceland."

"I'd like to go, too."

"Well, you can't."

"No, I've got to lay here and allow this wound to heal."

Nick did not accompany the funeral cortege to the cemetery.

He saw the coffin-lid screwed over the face of the dead man and turned away.

Instead of leaving the house, however, he passed softly up the main staircase and entered one of the rear rooms.

There was no hiding-place in sight, and he went back into the hall again. There he caught sight of a small door opening into an attic.

"That will do on a pinch," he thought, and went down stairs again.

He heard the servants talking in the basement, and stood at the foot of the stairs for some moments listening.

"I can't find anything, in this great barn of a house," a girl's voice said. "They ought to have left one of the old domestics here to show us around."

"She might have shown us all around to the police station," was the reply.

"You may be right about that," said the first speaker. "It's inconvenient now, but we have the whole house to ourselves."

Presently the girls went into the dining-room in the front part of the house, and Nick crept into the kitchen.

Back of the kitchen was a coal-house and store-room, and the detective went there.

He heard men talking, but could see no one.

Then he went to the back wall of the place and listened. The voices sounded plainer.

In a moment he heard the noise of picks and shovels.

There was no need to wait there any longer.

He knew that the tunnel starting in the North Clark street building terminated in the basement of the aristocratic Dearborn avenue residence.

"The cheek of the gang is simply wonderful," he thought.

As Nick was starting away he heard the girls returning

to the kitchen. He sprang into the store-room and concealed himself in an empty box, pulling the cover down over his head. Nick Carter rarely troubled himself with theories, but he had a very well-defined one in the case upon which he was working.

"First," he thought, "the young man became infatuated with Madge, and, together with his old uncle, was marked for destruction."

"When the crooks murdered the housekeeper and her friend, they did it for the purpose of getting Madge into the house. This they have, with the help of Charley, already done, and all the old servants have been replaced by members of the gang."

"This accomplished, they had no further use for Charley, and he was ruthlessly murdered. It will be the old man's turn next."

"They will kill him before he makes a new will. Then the woman Madge will prove up as the wife of the dead nephew, and inherit the entire fortune."

"In the meantime, they aim to work their schemes of murder and robbery from this house. It is a good scheme, and admirably planned, but it won't go."

The detective was satisfied with his work so far as the crooks were concerned, but he was after the actual murderers of the two old women. He knew that when he found them he should also find the murderers of Mr. Austin.

He believed that the peculiarity of the wounds would at last be the means of pointing out the persons who struck the blows.

Presently Nick heard the men removing bricks from the back wall of the store-house.

The tunnel was finished.

Before long the men stepped into the store-room.

"There," one of them said, "if they'll let us alone for a few weeks now, we'll have all the money there is in Chicago."

"How does Brocky get along?" asked another voice.

"Oh, he's in hock yet. The coppers nailed him for throwing that bottle at Nick Carter, and now they are holding him for resisting an officer. That was a fool scheme all the way through."

"You'd better whisper when you have such thoughts as that," was the reply. "It was done by the orders of the General, and he allows no back talk."

The fellow replied with a string of oaths, and then asked:

"Who ever saw the General?"

"I don't know. I never did."

"I don't believe there is any General."

"Who does all the planning, then?"

"Madge."

"You may be right. She's a hummer."

The men passed on into the house, and Nick crept out of his hiding-place and peered into the tunnel.

It was very dark inside, and very still.

"I guess it's the safest way out of the house," he thought, stepping into the entrance.

The place was narrow, and the floor was uneven, but Nick felt his way cautiously along until he came to a turn. Then he heard voices.

"When lo we get the old man out?" asked a voice.

"Don't know."

"It ought to be done at once. He will be sure to catch on, with all the noise the boys make."

"The General seems to be in no hurry."

There was silence for a moment, and then some one asked:

"How did the funeral go off?"

The fellow's companion laughed brutally.

"That was a great scheme," he said.

Nick heard the men approaching him, and tried to get out of the way, but was not quick enough.

One of the men carried a lamp, and its rays, coming suddenly around the corner, fell full upon the crouching figure of the detective.

"Who's there?"

Nick mumbled some reply, and tried to pass the two men.

One of them caught him by the throat.

The next moment the fellow fell headlong to the ground.

His companion dashed forward, and met with a similar reception.

Then the door from the Clark street basement opened, and a huge bull-dog, his red eyes glaring with rage and thirst for blood, sprang into the narrow tunnel.

Nick seized the lamp in one hand and held his pistol in the other.

CHAPTER VII.

FOUR TO ONE.

Madge seemed to be strangely excited when she left the vault where the body of the young man had been placed.

Instead of proceeding south on Clark street, she ordered the driver of the carriage to drive over to Evanston avenue and return to the city on that thoroughfare.

Near the end of the avenue she stopped at a small restaurant and stepped up to the cashier's desk.

There were few customers in the place, and no one within sound of their voices, the talk being in low tones.

"Anything new?" she asked.

"Yes," said the cashier, bending low over his paper, "and I have been waiting all day for some one to show up."

"Well?"

"You know I was summoned to the mask-ball."

"Yes."

"Well, I kept out of the racket, and when the officers took the two men out of the closet under the stairs I followed them."

"Yes."

"One of the men was a young fellow, and they seemed to be particularly careful of him."

"You are slow."

"I followed them to the young man's room."

"Where?"

"In the building over the headquarters on North Clark street."

"Well?"

"The fellow was disguised."

"I knew that."

"I mean under his costume."

"Another detective?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Chick, Nick Carter's best man."

"It can't be possible."

"But it is possible. I followed the coppers up stairs, and when there was a call for a surgeon I stepped in."

"You did well."

"Then I saw that it was Chick."

"Badly injured?"

"No; just a crack on the head."

"And then?"

"Not being a surgeon, I made a bluff to go for my instruments, and forgot to go back."

"And he is there still?"

"Of course. He can't get away."

"What ought we to do?"

"Go there and silence him."

"But how?"

The cashier laughed.

"You know how, I guess."

"Suggest something. Nick Carter is probably there."

"Go as a charity nurse and dope him."

"Good idea."

"Then don't forget to give me proper credit for it when you talk with the General."

"I shall not forget."

"It will be a glorious job," added the cashier.

"And still I don't like it."

"We are not safe a second while those two men live."

"But the idea of murdering a wounded man."

"Well, it's got to be done."

The woman entered her carriage and was driven down North Clark street.

A block away from Chick's room she dismissed the carriage and proceeded on foot.

A few moments later, Chick, lying on his bed, heard a low knock at the door of his room.

"Come in," he called out.

The door opened, and his landlady, accompanied by a plainly dressed woman, entered.

"A Sister of the White Cross," the landlady said, by way of introduction.

Chick nodded. His eyes were fastened on the bold black ones of the seeming city missionary.

"You are injured?" she asked, advancing to the side of the bed.

"It is only a scratch."

The woman laid her hand on the bandage.

"Let it alone," said the detective, almost rudely. "The doctor said it was not to be touched."

The woman drew back.

"I did not know it had been cared for," she said. "We find so many cases in the city where medical attendance is necessary."

The landlady started away.

"I leave you in good hands," she said, smiling at Chick.

Chick began to have his doubts on that subject, but he said nothing, and the seeming missionary sat down by his side and took out a small medicine case.

The keen eyes of the detective saw that it was entirely new.

"Are you suffering?" the woman asked

"No."

Madge took a glass from the table and filled it with water.

Then she dropped a white powder into it.

"Drink this," she said, "and you will sleep."

"I don't want to sleep."

Chick had been studying the face every moment the woman had been in the room, and he was now certain that the woman was Madge Bell.

His pistol lay under his pillow, and he slipped it down until it lay in his hand.

"Shall I read to you?"

The woman was certainly playing her role to perfection.

"Yes," said Chick, with a smile. "There is a paper on the table containing an account of the murder of two old women on Dearborn avenue. You might read that."

There was no mistaking the look in his eyes, and the woman threw aside the paper she had picked up.

"And so you know me?" she demanded, with the look of a fury in her bold black eyes.

"Yes; from the first moment you entered the room."

"You know what I came here to do?"

"I can imagine."

"Do you think anything can stop me?"

"Yes."

"What? You are at my mercy."

"This."

Chick threw aside the bed clothing as he spoke and arose to a sitting position, with the pistol in his hand.

The woman threw herself upon him.

Chick was weak from loss of blood, and the struggle was an unequal one. Before he could fire he was half-smothered under the clothing.

"You have always had the luck of the devil himself," hissed the woman, "but your time has come."

Chick struggled in vain.

He was being smothered.

The woman's face looked like the face of a fiend.

She wound her fingers around the helpless man's throat, removing the bed-clothes for that purpose.

The room swam before the detective's eyes, and the last thing he saw was the murderous gleam of the she-devil's eyes.

When he ceased to struggle, Madge arose to her feet.

She felt of his pulse, and laid her hand on his breast above his heart.

There were no signs of life.

"He has escaped so many times," muttered the woman, "that I will make sure now."

She placed her hand in her breast to draw her knife as she spoke.

It was not there.

In dressing for the funeral, she had neglected to place it in the little pocket made for it.

Then her eyes fell upon the glass of water.

"That will do as well," she thought.

She took another powder from her pocket and put it in a spoon of water. This she forced down the throat of the seemingly dead man.

"If there is a spark of life left," she muttered, "that will blot it out."

Then she left the room and proceeded to the basement.

The shoemaker on the bench by the door greeted her with a mysterious sign, and she passed him and opened the door to the recently constructed tunnel. As she passed in she heard the strange sound of a scuffle.

She hastened along and soon came upon a strange scene.

Nick Carter, with a revolver in his hand, stood facing a savage bull-dog, and two men lay on the floor behind him.

The dog seemed afraid to advance, and the woman urged him on with her voice. Then she saw four men creeping toward the detective from behind.

In a moment they were upon him.

There was no use for Nick to struggle.

The four men were powerful fellows, and he was forced to the earth and bound and gagged.

Then the woman stepped forward.

"A good day's work," she said, with a ring of triumph in her voice. "I have just killed Chick in his room, and now we have the famous Nick Carter in our power."

"What shall we do with him?" asked one of the men.

"Take him back into the house for the present. He will be dead before dark."

The crooks lifted the detective from the ground and carried him away.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCORES OF THIEVES AT WORK.

The landlady, sympathetic old soul, dropped in at Chick's room to have a final chat with the alleged Sister of the White Cross.

She found Chick rolling over and over on the floor, black in the face.

"Quick," he muttered faintly, as she entered, "get a doctor at once. I have been poisoned."

The landlady almost flew down stairs, and in a moment returned with a druggist.

Chick pointed to the glass on the table.

"I have taken a dose of that," he said. "Give me an antidote."

The druggist looked at the stuff in the glass, and laughed.

"It is flour," he said.

"How do you know?" gasped Chick, struggling for breath.

"A plainly dressed, black-eyed woman gave it to you, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Well, she came into my place a little while ago, and asked for a certain deadly poison. I had seen her around the gang that rents the basement, and I didn't like her looks. I took her money, and put up a package of flour."

Chick laughed heartily.

"I thought I was a goner," he said. "My! how she did choke!"

Chick thought best to tell the druggist a fair share of the story of the gang in the basement, and did so.

"I shall watch them," said that gentleman, as he went back to his store.

After the landlady had gone, Chick saw a folded slip of paper lying on the floor.

"It must have dropped from the woman's pocket during the struggle," he thought, picking it up.

It was badly written, but Chick's face burned with excitement as he read the few words the paper contained:

"Nos. Five to Forty to be at 'The Fair' at four o'clock. All to begin work as the clock strikes, and each one to take care of himself or herself in case of discovery."

The note was simply signed "General."

Chick looked at his watch.

It was a quarter past three.

The woman had made quick time from the cemetery, for the funeral had been held at noon.

The detective began to dress himself.

Weak and wounded as he was, he meant to go to the chief of police, and give notice of the raid that was to be made on "The Fair."

There was no knowing where Nick Carter was.

If the faithful fellow had only known what peril Nick was in, the chances are that he would have turned the police northward instead of southward when he reached the City Hall.

"What will the thieves do next?" said the chief, as Chick told his story. "They have done everything but make a raid in force, and now, it seems, they are about to attempt that."

It was, indeed, a desperate undertaking.

At four o'clock in the afternoon "The Fair" is always crowded, and a large number of private detectives are on the watch for thieves.

Now the thieves were about to send enough men and women to the store to have a representative in every department.

The first one detected in stealing might be caught, but during the excitement all the other thieves would be sure to reap a rich harvest.

"It is a fine plan," said Chick, "and there is no time to lose. Get your men there as soon as possible."

Chick left the chief's office alone, and took a position near the cashier's desk in the large "Fair" building.

In a few moments policemen in plain clothing began to crowd up to the counters. The detective thought there were too many of them.

Chick looked at his watch again.

Three minutes to four!

In a moment the rush would come, for at least one of the thieves was sure to be caught at the very start, as most of the clerks had been warned to drop all business and watch the goods.

Chick glanced down the long aisles, and saw dozens of officers, but there was not one crook in sight that he knew.

But he felt certain that the crooks were there, and on all the other floors of the great store.

Chick took out his watch and held it in his hand.

At one minute to four a peculiar whistle rang through the lower floor. The detective listened intently, and heard the sound repeated on every floor in the building.

No one saw the man who had uttered the first warning.

The waiting officers looked at each other in amazement.

Then the customers around them began to move toward the exits.

Chick knew in a moment what had happened.

The thieves had caught on to the fact that they were watched.

At length a girl at the book counter, near the Dearborn street entrance, raised a cry that a thief had stolen a valuable volume.

In an instant all was confusion.

Customers dashed here and there, but the officers stood by the counters where they had been placed.

Not another thing was touched.

Not an arrest was made.

Chick went back to the City Hall in a very disgusted frame of mind.

"They caught on," he said to the chief. "Too many men were sent there. We will have to try some other way."

Just then the man in charge of the squad entered the office.

"The crowd in 'The Fair' when we got there," he said, "would have taken the premium at any thief's fair in the world. I never saw so many criminals together in my life, outside the walls of a State prison."

"Yes," said Chick, "I guess they were all there."

"Where is Mr. Carter?" asked the chief.

"That's just what I'd like to know," replied Chick. "I haven't seen him since noon."

"You don't think he's in trouble."

Chick laughed.

"Nick Carter has a way of taking care of himself," he said. "I should not worry if he remained away a month."

"Why," said the man who had had charge of the squad at "The Fair," "I thought Carter stood right there by you all the time."

"If he was there," was the reply, "he did not make himself known to me."

"He surely would have done so," said the chief.

"I think so."

"Well," continued the officer, "some one stood right there watching you every moment you were in the store." Chick looked puzzled.

"It is strange I didn't catch on," he said.

"You had better take a carriage home," said the chief.

"You may be followed and attacked."

"I wouldn't be much good at this business," was the reply, "if I couldn't take care of myself."

"But you are wounded."

"I am still a pretty good man."

"Well, have your own way; only remember that we can't afford to lose your services just yet."

"We are not having the luck on this case that we had on the last one," was the reply, "and it may be that we shall have to give it up and go back to New York."

"When you want men, all you have to do is to let me know. My whole force is at your disposal."

Chick thanked the generous officer, and walked away. To tell the truth, he was a trifle nervous regarding the affair at "The Fair."

He was annoyed, too, to think that he had been shadowed without finding it out.

"This bang on the head must have rattled me," he thought, as he walked along Clark street.

He did not take the cable cars north, but walked across Clark street bridge and kept along on the broad pavement.

"The best way to find out whether I am watched," he thought, "is to give them a chance at me."

The detective's head was still bandaged, so it was impossible for him to put on a disguise.

That was the way, undoubtedly, he thought, that the crooks had caught on to him at "The Fair."

Several blocks from the bridge he stepped into a saloon and sat down to rest, for his long walk had made him tired.

It was in every respect a first-class place, and he had no idea that the crooks would follow him there. Three men entered as he sat at a table.

They all ordered whisky, and stood at the bar for a moment talking.

Then one of them walked up to Chick.

"Got a smash in the head, didn't you?" he said, with a very offensive epithet.

The detective looked up in surprise.

"Why do you speak to me?" he asked. "I never saw you before."

"Oh, yes, you did," said the other. "You're the bloke that insulted the ladies down here by the Windsor Theater, last night."

"And you're the chap that put the head on me?"

"You bet."

"You're a liar!"

The fellow drew back and threw off his overcoat.

"We'll see about that," he said.

"Hold on," yelled the bartender. "If you fellows have any trouble to settle, you'd better go outside and do it. We don't want any racket in the saloon."

"Will you go outside?" asked the fellow.

"No."

"Coward!"

"You might pick my pockets," said Chick, coolly.

"Then it's got to be settled right here."

The three men gathered about the detective.

He knew that they were there to kill him.

He was in no shape to fight three burly crooks, and the

bartender seemed to be afraid to interfere, except with his mouth.

Chick stood up and placed his back against the wall. Then he turned to the bartender.

"I want you to know something about this," he said. "These men are murderers and thieves. I am a detective, working a case against them. They have come here to kill me. I want you to see that I gave them a fair chance, and a fair warning."

"He is a liar!" shouted one of the men, rushing forward.

Chick shot through the pocket of his coat, and the foremost man fell to the floor with a bullet in his heart.

The other men rushed forward, drawing weapons as they advanced.

Crack!

Crack!

Both men went down, one of them fatally injured, the other unconscious from a wound in the head.

The wounded man lifted his head as the bartender bent over him.

"What he said is true," he whispered. "Let him go."

But policemen rushed in, and Chick was not released until the chief had been heard from.

CHAPTER IX.

A BLOODY KNIFE.

"Hello!"

"Hello, yourself!"

"Feel all right?"

"Of course."

The upper hall-way in the Mildon house was quite dark. The winter sun had gone down in a cloudy sky, and it was dark at half-past four.

It was the afternoon of the attempted raid on "The Fair."

A rather respectable-looking crook stood in the hall-way, talking, seemingly, with the man who had that day been buried.

Charley Mildon seemed to be as well-dressed and as handsome as ever, only his face was slightly pale.

"How did you get out so quick?" asked the crook.

The young man hesitated.

"You had better ask Madge," he said.

"Oh, it's all right. I know the whole scheme. Only it strikes me that you were to lie still for about three days, and then get out of town without showing yourself."

"I'm not showing myself now, am I?"

"You must have caught a duse of a cold in the coffin. Your voice don't sound natural."

The young man started back to his room.

"Hold on," said the crook. "You know that you and I are matched to get the old man out of the way?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll flip a coin with you."

"Let 'er flip."

The crook took out a coin.

"Head or tail?" he asked.

"Head."

The coin went whirling in the air, and fell on the carpet with a ring.

"I win," said the crook, pointing to the coin, lying tail up on the carpet. "You can do the job just as soon as you like."

"Where is he?"

"What?"

"Where is he?"

"You must be crazy."

"He has not been moved, then?"

"No, he is right there, where we left him."

"All right."

"Have you a knife?"

"No."

The crook handed out a wicked-looking weapon.

"Throw it away when you get done with it," he said.

The young man turned to his room again.

"When do you get out?" called out the crook.

"To-night."

"Well, do your work before you go."

"Sure."

The door closed, and the crook went on down stairs.

Then the door opened again, and the young man crept from room to room, looking in every one on that floor.

He did not seem to find what he was looking after.

Then he crept back in the attic and looked around there.

In a moment he heard the sound of labored breathing.

It came from the highest part of the attic, where a number of boxes were piled.

The young man crept in that direction, and the sounds came clearer to his ears.

He pushed one of the boxes aside, and looked in the little hiding-place thus revealed.

Millionaire Mildon lay groaning on the floor.

He waved his hand faintly for the young man to keep away.

"I know the whole plot," he moaned, "and I don't want to see you."

"How did you learn it?"

"I heard that woman talking when she thought I was asleep."

"And you know——"

"That your death was a put-up job from the start, and that you are the husband of that wicked woman."

"Well?"

"I am not to be allowed to make a new will, and she, as your wife, will inherit this property. May the curse of God go with it!"

"I suppose I killed the housekeeper and her friend, too, didn't I?"

"I have no proof, but I think it extremely likely."

"Well, I am here to help you. Do just as I say, and you shall be saved."

There was no little feeling in the young man's voice.

The old man again motioned him away.

"Don't come near me," he said.

"Are you able to move?"

"Yes."

"Then crawl out of that place, and stand here by me."

"I am bound."

"Heaven's! An old man bound in his own house!"

The old man looked up sharply.

"Your voice sounds strangely," he said, "and I never heard you talk like that before."

The young man cut the ropes which confined the old man's limbs and held him to the floor, and then aided him in getting out of his cramped quarters.

"Now," he said, in a moment, "you are to go into some other hiding-place here, and remain perfectly still until I come for you."

"Are you really my nephew? You don't act like him!"

"Of course. Then, if any one comes in here, and succeeds in finding you, shoot to kill. Here is a weapon."

The young man placed a revolver in the millionaire's trembling hand.

"You have the courage to use it?" he asked.

"Yes."

The old man concealed himself in the most distant part of the attic, and the young man turned toward the door.

Before leaving the attic, however, he bared his arm, and made a gash in it with the knife. The blood stained the blade and handle and ran down on the floor.

Then he opened the attic door and trailed it a short distance toward the staircase.

Then he bound up his arm and took up a rag and tried to wipe up the blood, leaving a great smear on the carpet.

He closed the attic door and locked it.

Then he went to his room and rang the bell.

"Bring up a mop and some water," he said, when the servant made her appearance. "I spilled some red paint on the floor."

When the girl appeared again, the crook who had flipped the coin was with her.

"You ought to be careful," he said. "Red paint is bad stuff to get on the carpet."

The girl laughed, placed the mop and pail of water on the floor, and went back down stairs.

"Clean it yourself," she said, as she disappeared.

"Did he struggle?" asked the crook.

"Yes. Don't talk about it."

Both men set to work cleaning the carpet.

"I don't see how it got out here," said the crook.

"He ran out here. There's your knife."

The young fellow threw the blood-stained knife toward his companion, who shuddered as it fell at his side.

"I don't want it," he said.

In a short time the work was completed, and the crook went back to the lower floor.

The young man made several journeys from the room to the attic, and finally passed down stairs toward the front door, accompanied by a woman.

He did not look like Charley Mildon.

"Hello!" shouted the crook, who seemed to be on watch, "where are you going?"

The young fellow turned and pointed toward his companion.

"Going to take my girl out for a walk," he said.

"Madge will be in your wool," said the crook. "Don't give yourself away, anywhere, now."

"I should say not."

It was well for the crook that he did not advance any nearer. Even as he spoke two pistols were pointed at his heart.

Ten minutes after the pair left the house, Madge Bell came bounding up the steps, cursing the officers who had defeated the raid on "The Fair."

"Did you meet Charley?" asked the crook.

"Meet Charley? I just left him at the hiding-place. He has not been out, and will not go out for three or four days."

"He has been here all the afternoon, and has gone out with one of the girls. He put the old man to sleep, too."

"Where is the prisoner—Nick Carter?"

"I know nothing about any prisoner."

Madge screamed with rage.

"Nick Carter has walked out of the house right before your eyes," she screamed, "and has taken the old man with him."

CHAPTER X.

THE WATCHMAKER'S HAMMER.

Chick had just seated himself in his room, after the exciting time in the saloon, when Nick Carter, accompanied by the old millionaire, dashed in.

The latter at once threw himself into a chair.

"I haven't walked so far in five years," he said.

"You are not done walking yet," said Nick. "You and Chick must get out of here at once."

The latter looked up in amazement.

"What's the matter now?" he asked.

"The people are all stirred up over at the house on Dearborn avenue," was the reply. "They know that I am on to the tunnel racket, and that I have been in the house and got the old gentlemen away. They may come here and make a play for even. I guess they will be sorry they captured me."

Then Nick explained all that had taken place since the funeral services over the living man, and how he had been imprisoned in Charley's room, and had worked his bonds off and escaped.

Chick also had a story to tell, but it was quickly told and the old man and the wounded detective were soon snugly located in another room in the building.

"Where are you going?" asked Chick, as Nick started away.

"Going to watch for Madge Bell. She will go to Charley when she finds out what has happened, and the worthy pair will make an effort to leave the city."

"But the remainder of the gang?"

"I shall ask the chief to send men up and take possession of the house. If they go in at both entrances they will be likely to make quite a capture."

"Why can't I go with the police?"

"You are not well enough. Stay here. The old man may need a protector."

Nick changed his disguise to that of a street-cleaner, and was soon in front of the house on Dearborn avenue.

A carriage was at the door, and presently Madge came out, entered it, and was driven away in the direction of the park.

Just then a carriage came along, and Nick sprang in without ceremony and took the reins from the hands of the frightened driver.

"I have no time to explain now," he said, "but you will be well paid for any trouble you may be put to. It is enough that I am an officer."

The carriage in front turned toward the lake in a few moments, and went one block. Then it turned north again and went another block.

In five minutes it was on Clark street, driving south.

"They are making a great break to throw us off," said the detective, "but we can drive as far as they can."

The rig finally drove over a mile and then stopped in front of a large building. The woman got out and went up stairs.

Nick drove along some distance, and then, after handing the driver a ten-dollar bill, walked to the place where the woman had entered the building.

He did not like to wait outside, and so he entered a jewelry store near by, bought a cheap trifle, and stood where he could see the stair-way Madge had ascended.

The jeweler was repairing some time-pieces close to the window.

Nick saw him looking among his tools, and then heard him ask his clerk:

"Where's my new hammer?"

"I don't know."

The jeweler hunted for some moments longer, and then went to the back end of the store.

"I wish you'd let things alone," he said, angrily.

"Why," said the clerk, "I haven't seen your hammer since you lent it to that young fellow who left the deposit."

"What young fellow?"

"I don't know his name. He wore a queer fur-top overcoat."

"Where does he live?"

"He didn't say. Then you are out a hammer."

"I suppose so, but I've got the deposit."

The jeweler went grumblingly back to his table.

Nick stepped up to him.

"Let me see your hammer," he said.

The jeweler threw out an old implement.

"I had a much better one," he said.

One end was round, and one end was flat.

Nick measured the round end.

It was the same size as the wounds in the heads of the two women who had been murdered in the Dearborn avenue house.

"When did the young man get the hammer?" he asked.

"Only a few days ago."

"And he did not return it?"

"No."

Nick handed back the hammer and stood with his hands in his pockets, looking out of the window.

He had the clew at last, for he remembered the queer fur-top overcoat.

His theory had been entirely wrong.

Charley Mildon was the murderer, after all.

"I will never build another theory," thought Nick.

"They are never any good."

"What did he want with the hammer?" asked the detective, after a short silence.

"He said he wanted to do some tinkering with it."

Young Mildon had taken good care to conceal his crooked life.

"I don't wonder I didn't suspect him," thought Nick.

In a short time the woman came down stairs, but she was not alone.

Charley Mildon was with her.

Madge dismissed the carriage, and the couple took a cable car for the South Side.

Nick swung himself on to the rear platform of the same car, and stood facing the door.

His face was dirty, and his clothes were old and ragged, so there was very little chance of his being recognized.

The woman looked sharply at every one in the car, but did not seem to notice the rough-looking fellow on the rear platform.

It was five o'clock, and at that hour the cable cars going south are rarely crowded.

Just before the car came to the great La Salle street tunnel, a policeman in uniform got on the front platform, and looked inside.

In a moment he opened the door and sat down by the side of the woman. The detective saw that the woman was suspicious of the fellow.

At the great double arch, under the river, there was a blockade of cars, and most of the passengers stepped out on the platform to see what was the matter.

The woman stepped out behind the policeman.

They stood there for some moments in that position. The officer seemed to be attracted by the woman's appearance, or something else, for he regarded her keenly.

Of course the woman supposed that he had been sent there to watch her, and to prevent her escaping.

When the car started again the woman slipped and fell, striking against the policeman as she went down.

With a cry of fright, the officer caught at the railing and fell from the platform.

Nick expected every moment to hear the bones of the unfortunate man grinding under the wheels.

But he did not fall against the stone wall of the tunnel, and so was not forced under the wheels.

He caught on the railing at the rear of the platform and hung on, and when the car stopped he clambered up on the platform again, not in the least injured.

"You ought to be careful," he said, turning angrily toward the woman. "I might have been killed there."

"You're the only man I ever saw get out of a scrape like that with a whole hide," said the conductor.

Nick knew what it all meant, and realized more than ever the desperate character of the woman with whom he was dealing.

The policeman got off at the City Hall, and the woman looked relieved. Then she began whispering to her companion.

Nick stepped inside and sat down.

Most of the passengers got off at the corner of La Salle and Monroe streets, but the two crooks remained in their seats.

Nick passed them on his way to the front platform.

As he did so, he heard the woman say:

"At the Transportation Building in an hour."

The detective got off the car and hurried back to the City Hall.

The chief was soon informed of the condition of affairs at the house on Dearborn avenue, and then Nick took a car for Jackson Park, the site of the Great World's Fair.

CHAPTER XI.

NICK CARTER'S QUICK DECISION.

"We are away from the spotters at last."

It was quite dark at the World's Fair grounds.

Madge Bell and Charley Mildon were walking up and down in front of the Transportation Building.

"Yes, but we have had an awful chase. I can't see what you wanted to come away out here for. We shall be turned out before long. See, they are closing now. It is six o'clock."

Madge laughed.

"Every policeman in the city is watching for us by this time," she said, "and we could not go to a hotel. It would have been fatal to have attempted to take a train."

"But why come here?"

"Because, in the crowd driving away, we shall not be noticed. And then I have friends here."

"Friends?"

"Yes, every night at six o'clock some one is waiting for me here. Oh, I don't take any more chances than I am compelled to."

"Will the party come to-night?"

"Yes. He is always here."

"It seems to be a good hiding-place."

"The very best in Chicago. It will swarm with crooks after the first of next May."

Nick, standing close by the building, listening to the conversation, did not like the shape affairs were taking.

He was all alone, and would have to make three arrests.

While the crooks were talking he glided away and accosted two members of the park police force.

"I am Nick Carter," he said, "and I shall want some help in arresting three crooks. Will you help me?"

The men were only too glad to assist the famous detective, and they said so at once, only asking him to show his authority.

While the three men were arranging matters, a man joined Madge and Charley.

Then the woman and the new-comer walked away together.

"Follow them," said Nick. "Don't let them come back or escape."

The park officers disappeared.

Then Nick walked up to the young man.

"Are you waiting for some one?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Lonesome, ain't it?"

"A little."

"Then I'll tell you a story while you wait."

Charley started away.

"I don't care to hear your story," he said.

The fellow was evidently suspicious.

Nick caught him by the arm.

"There was a young fellow who had a rich uncle," Nick began, "and who got mixed up with a lot of thieves and murderers."

Young Mildon started at the words, but Nick went on:

"The young man decided to murder the uncle."

Charley tried to break away, but could not.

"He hired a watchmaker's hammer one day, and went to the house."

The murderer uttered a cry of rage, and struggled with the detective, but was held as with a grasp of iron.

"The housekeeper let him in, and he struck her first, killing her with one blow. Then something unexpected happened."

"A friend of the murdered woman came up the kitchen stairs. She, too, was killed with the watchmaker's hammer."

"Why are you detaining me?" shouted the terrified murderer. "I shall miss my friend."

"Then," went on the relentless voice, "the young man went up stairs to the room where his invalid uncle sat by the front window."

"He tried every means in his power to get the invalid away from the window, but did not succeed."

"He tried to borrow money, knowing that the old man had a large sum in a bureau in his room, but the old man refused to let him have the money, and so did not go away from the window."

"A strange story," groaned the young man.

"Yes; very strange. When the young man could not get the money, he asked the old man for a drink of wine, but the uncle refused to get up, saying that it was like his lazy nephew to want his crippled relative to wait upon him. The young man did not dare strike the old man there in full view of the street."

Young Mildon stood there in the light of the electric lamps, looking more like a corpse than a live man.

"Then some one rang the bell down stairs. Or perhaps the young man fancied that he heard the bell ring. He knew that the two dead women lay on the floor of the main hall, and he went down to turn the caller away as best he might."

"There was no one there."

"The young man stepped out to look about, and a gust of wind forced the door shut."

"He was locked out, and had no key."

"He went to his rooms, not far away, and returned in a few moments to find the house filled with officers."

"He told his story, omitting only the killing of the two women, and it was believed."

"And now the question is:

"Who rang the bell?"

Young Mildon seemed about to fall to the earth.

Nick thrust his face within a foot of that of the trembling man.

"Give me the watchmaker's hammer that you used," he said.

The young man hesitated but an instant.

Then he reached his hand into an inside pocket and drew out a long package.

This he unrolled, and in a second a blood-stained hammer lay in the detective's hands.

"Take it," said the prisoner, huskily, "it has haunted me every moment since I struck the blows. I have not been able to even put it away from me."

"And so you are the murderer of Mr. Austin, too?"

"Yes."

Then the wretched man added:

"You must be a devil!"

He tried to escape, but Nick quickly overpowered him. At that instant the sound of a scuffle was heard in the direction taken by the two officers, and then two pistol-shots rang out.

Almost immediately the two officers came up, but they had only one prisoner.

The woman had escaped!

It would be useless to search for her then, and so the little party started for the City Hall.

Once more Nick found Chick there.

The young man had not been able to resist the temptation to go with the officers on the raid, and had practically lead the charge into the Dearborn avenue house.

"We only got half a dozen," he said, ruefully, "but we got the leaders, and two of them have confessed."

"The woman has escaped," said Nick.

"That's too bad. She is the head of the secret order, and is known as the General."

"Well, we can take her some other time, for she will never leave the country as long as Charles Mildon is alive."

"Which will not be long," said the chief, "for he admits having committed three murders."

"I'm sorry we didn't get the whole gang," said Nick.

"The job seems only half done."

"Suppose you stay and finish it"

The chief was terribly in earnest.

He wanted Chicago purified before the opening of the World's Fair.

He believed Nick Carter to be the only one who could do the work.

But the detective declared that he had an important engagement in New York, and must leave at once.

And so they left the office of the chief of the Chicago police force.

Millionaire Mildon was profuse in his thanks, and grieved very little over the fate of his nephew.

But the old man seemed in constant dread of Madge Bell.

"She will come back," he said, "when there is no one to protect me, and then I shall meet my fate."

"If worst comes to worst," said Nick, with a smile, "you may send for me."

"And you will come?"

"Certainly."

The old man grasped the detective warmly by the hand.

"Don't forget your promise," he said. And Nick turned away, little dreaming how soon he was to be called upon to redeem his pledge.

The next day the two detectives left for New York.

"There is one thing I am not satisfied about," said Nick, as they rode along.

"What's that?"

"I can't make up my mind who rang that bell, if it really was rung."

(THE END.)

The NICK CARTER LIBRARY has the largest circulation of any Library ever published.

"CHICAGO'S CARNIVAL OF CRIME; or, NICK CARTER TO THE RESCUE," by the author of "Nick Carter," will be published in the next number (88) of the NICK CARTER LIBRARY.

NICK CARTER LIBRARY

THE BEST FIVE CENT LIBRARY OF DETECTIVE STORIES.

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

- No. 3—A MILLION DOLLAR CHECK; Or, THE LITTLE GIANT AT WORK. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 4—ONE AGAINST TWENTY-ONE; Or, THE RANCH ROBBERY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 5—THE CIPHER LETTER; Or, NICK CARTER'S IRON NERVE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 6—NICK CARTER IN PHILADELPHIA; Or, THE NIGHT HAWKS OF THE QUAKER CITY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 7—OLD THUNDERBOLT, LOCOMOTIVE; Or, THE PACKAGE IN THE MIDNIGHT MAIL. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 8—NICK CARTER BEFORE THE MAST; Or, A SEA MYSTERY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 9—A MAN WITH FOUR IDENTITIES; Or, THE LITTLE GIANT'S PROBLEM. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 10—NICK CARTER'S DOUBLE GAME; Or, THE GHOST OF RAVENSWOOD HOUSE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 11—NICK CARTER IN BOSTON; Or, A CLEVER FORGER'S SCHEME. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 12—CHECK No. 777; Or, HUNTING THE SAME MAN TWICE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 13—3,000 MILES BY FREIGHT; Or, THE MYSTERY OF A PIANO BOX. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 14—THE THIRTEEN'S OATH OF VENGEANCE; Or, A CRIMINAL COMPACT. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 15—THE FATE OF DOCTOR QUARTZ; Or, THE MURDER IN THE DISSECTING ROOM. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 16—PACKAGE '17 A; Or, THE SECRET OF A FAMILY FEUD. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 17—NICK CARTER'S GREAT PERIL; Or, A PRISONER FOR LIFE WITH THE DEAD. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 18—THE GREAT DETECTIVE DEFIED; Or, ZELMA, THE FEMALE FIEND. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 19—THE LITTLE GIANT'S TASK; Or, NICK CARTER'S WONDERFUL NERVE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 20—BROUGHT TO BAY AT LAST; Or, OUTWITTED, OUT-GENERATED AND OUTDONE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 21—NICK CARTER AT WESTERN UNION JUNCTION; Or, THE ST. PAUL TRAIN ROBBERY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 22—NICK CARTER'S CELEBRATED CASE; Or, THE MYSTERIES OF GOTHAM. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 23—THE LITTLE GIANT ON DECK; Or, THE GREAT ABDUCTION CASE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 24—NICK CARTER AT GLENDALE; Or, THE ROBBERY OF THE 'FRISCO NIGHT EXPRESS. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 25—YOUNG HERCULES, NICK CARTER'S ASSISTANT; Or, A MAN OF MUSCLE AND NERVE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 26—NICK CARTER IN SAN FRANCISCO; Or, UNEARTHING CRIME IN CHINATOWN. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 27—NICK CARTER IN CHICAGO; Or, THE CRIME OF THE LAKE CITY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 28—THE PASSENGER GOING EAST. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 29—NICK CARTER'S MYSTERIOUS CASE; Or, THE ROAD-HOUSE TRAGEDY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 30—MAD MADGE, THE QUEEN OF CROOKS; Or, FIGHTING AN ARTFUL FOE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 31—A DEAD MAN'S GRIP; Or, THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 32—NICK CARTER IN KANSAS CITY; Or, THE NIGHT HAWKS REVIVED. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 33—THE MYSTERIOUS MAIL BAG ROBBERY; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREAT CATCH. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 34—YOUNG HERCULES IN MEXICO; Or, PLUCK AND MUSCLE AGAINST STRATEGY. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 35—NINETY MILES AN HOUR; Or, THE PROBLEM OF SEVEN DEATHS. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 36—NICK CARTER IN ST. LOUIS; Or, THE NIGHT HAWKS' LAST SCREECH. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 37—NICK CARTER IN BALTIMORE; Or, THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RED LEAGUE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 38—NICK CARTER IN NEW ORLEANS; Or, THE RED LEAGUE'S LAST EFFORT. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 39—THREE TIMES DEAD; Or, NICK CARTER IN A TIGHT PLACE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 40—THE GREAT JEWEL ROBBERY; Or, NICK CARTER AMONG THE HOTEL THIEVES. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 41—THE FOURFOLD MURDER; Or, NICK CARTER'S CLEVER WORK IN FLORIDA. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 42—THE N. Y. CENTRAL TRAIN ROBBERY; Or, THE NERVIEST OUTLAW ALIVE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 43—THE LETTERS ON THE FLOOR; Or, NICK CARTER'S CLEVER DECIPHER. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 44—NICK CARTER ON HIS METTLE; Or, A CHASE AFTER A FORTUNE. By the Author of "Nick Carter," etc.
- No. 45—NICK CARTER'S GREATEST PERIL; Or, ON THE TRAIL OF A HUMAN FIEND. By the Author of "Nick Carter," etc.
- No. 46—THE GOLD BRICK SWINDLERS; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREAT EXPOSURE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 47—NICK CARTER ON THE BOWERY; Or, THE TERRORS OF ONE NIGHT. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 48—NICK CARTER'S HANDICAP; Or, WON IN A CANTER. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 49—BOLD MASKED ROBBERS; Or, NICK CARTER'S LIVELY CONFLICT. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 50—NICK CARTER'S FIGHT FOR LIFE; Or, THE MILLIONAIRE'S NEMESIS. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 51—JUDGE LYNCH'S MISTAKE; Or, NICK CARTER'S SEARCH FOR A MURDERER. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 52—A BOLD BANK ROBBERY; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREAT HAUL. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 53—NICK CARTER IN WALL STREET; Or, TRACKING A STOLEN FORTUNE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 54—TRICKED AND TRAPPED; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREEN GOODS HAUL. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 55—ROBBED BY RIVER PIRATES; Or, NICK CARTER AMONG THE WHARF RATS. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 56—A DARING DEED; Or, NICK CARTER SOLVING THE OAKLAND MYSTERY. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 57—A MYSTERY OF THE SURF; Or, NICK CARTER AT CONEY ISLAND. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 58—NICK CARTER IN CHINATOWN; Or, THE DOYERS STREET CRIMINALS. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 59—NICK CARTER AT SING SING; Or, IN HOT PURSUIT OF AN ESCAPED CRIMINAL. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 60—A MYSTERY OF THE RIALTO; Or, NICK CARTER IN NEW YORK. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 61—THE GREAT BANK HOLD UP IN DENVER; Or, NICK CARTER'S DIFFICULT CASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 62—SHOT WITH A ROULETTE BALL; Or, NICK CARTER AMONG THE GAMBLERS. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 63—THE SIX ACES; Or, EXPOSING A GREAT SWINDLER. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 64—THE GREAT GREEN GOODS SWINDLE; Or, NICK CARTER'S CLEVER CATCH. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 65—THREE OF A KIND; Or, NICK CARTER'S WINNING HAND. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 66—THE SNAKE BROOCH; Or, NICK CARTER'S STARTLING DISCOVERY. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 67—THE DALTON GANG WIPED OUT; Or, NICK CARTER'S DEADLY RIFLE. By the Author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 68—HER SHREW'D DOUBLE; Or, NICK CARTER'S LADY ASSISTANT AT WORK. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 69—THE HYPNOTIST'S VICTIM; Or, NICK CARTER'S COMPLICATED CASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 70—NICK CARTER IN PITTSBURGH; Or, ESCAPED FROM JAIL. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 71—THE SUBURBAN SAFE CRACKERS; Or, NICK CARTER'S MATCHLESS SKILL. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 72—MURDERED FOR REVENGE; Or, NICK CARTER'S PECULIAR CASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 73—A CLEVER CRIMINAL; Or, NICK CARTER'S FORTUNATE CLEW. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 74—THE LAST OF THE GLENDALE GANG; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREAT SUCCESS. By the author "Nick Carter."
- No. 75—THE CINCINNATI BANK SWINDLE; Or, NICK CARTER'S GREAT FORGERY CASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 76—A MURDER IN THE SNOW; Or, NICK CARTER'S CURIOUS CASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 77—BAGGAGE CHECK x623; Or, NICK CARTER AMONG THE HOTEL SWINDLERS. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 78—THE CONCEALED BOOTY; Or, NICK CARTER'S FIRST RATE FIND. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 79—THE \$35,000 SWINDLE; Or NICK CARTER AND THE INSURANCE FRAUDS. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 80—THE PRINCE OF CROOKS; Or, NICK CARTER'S CLEVER SCHEME. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 81—TRACKED TO MONTREAL; Or, NICK CARTER'S LONG CHASE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 82—FROM PALACE TO PRISON; Or, NICK CARTER'S CAPTURE OF A SWELL CROOK. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 83—THE FREIGHT THIEVES; Or, NICK CARTER'S EXPERT EXPOSURE. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 84—THE UNDERGROUND TUNNEL; Or, NICK CARTER IN BROOKLYN. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 85—THE TURKISH BATH MYSTERY; Or, NICK CARTER AFTER A SLICK PAIR. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 86—THE BANK DRAFT RAISER; Or, NICK CARTER'S CAPTURE OF A SLIPPERY CRIMINAL. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 87—THE WATCHMAKER'S HAMMER; Or, NICK CARTER'S QUICK DECISION. By the author of "Nick Carter."
- No. 88—CHICAGO'S CARNIVAL OF CRIME; Or, NICK CARTER TO THE RESCUE. By the author of "Nick Carter."

For sale by all newsdealers at five cents per copy, or sent postpaid on receipt of price.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,
P. O. BOX 2734. 31, ROSE STREET New York.